

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN

HOMILETIC MAGAZINE.

VOL. III.

JANUARY, 1905.

No. 1.

Sermon on 1 Tim. 1, 15.

“Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” That is the question which Nathanael put to Philip when the latter told him that he had found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph. Philip said unto him, “Come and see.”

“Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” That is the question which is put even to-day whenever and wherever Jesus Christ, the Crucified, is preached. True, God’s Word never returns void. The sweet Gospel, the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, the God incarnate, the Savior of sinners, has brought thousands, yea, millions of souls out of impenetrable darkness into heavenly light, out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God; but however true and gratifying this is, it is also only too true that, wherever Christ Crucified has been preached, He has become unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness. Who knows, my friends, how many there may be among us who, though to outward appearance Christians, yet in their hearts think, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Can Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews, the man who was crucified, who died an ignominious death on Calvary, can He save us, reconcile us to God?

Ay, “can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” That is the question asked by millions and millions of people of to-day, people, who, professing themselves to be wise, become fools. Wherever we look, on all sides, infidelity has sprung up, and grown up, and is spreading farther and farther; wherever a minister of the Gospel proclaims the Word of the cross: there Satan is busily engaged; there the Word of God meets with opposition; there people cry out, “What a foolish saying! How unworthy of all acceptance!” there the minister, like Paul, must hear, “What will this

babbler say?" But, my friends, however sad and discouraging this is, yet there are men who, with Paul, exclaim from the bottom of their hearts, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!" yet there are men who will preach the Word of God, on the one hand, in all its sweetness, and, on the other, in all its severity; men who will proclaim the whole, the entire counsel of God; and such a man has now been called to this congregation. What is it that he will preach? What is it that this congregation shall hear from his lips? Not the word of man, not the teachings and sophistry of the wise of this world, no, indeed! but the Word of God,

THE OLD, OLD STORY THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE
WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS.

Of this story, of this saying, let me, too, speak to you this evening, and let me show you, according to our text,

- I. *That it is a faithful saying, and*
- II. *That it is worthy of all acceptance.*

I.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Thus writes St. Paul, one of the wisest and most learned men of his time—a man who had been one of the bitterest and most ferocious enemies of Christ and His followers—a man who thought he was doing God a service by persecuting the Christians and throwing them into prisons and dungeons. This man, by the grace of God, had been converted, had been torn out of the army of Satan and placed into the foremost ranks of the army of Jesus, fighting the battles of Him whom he had persecuted, whom he had blasphemed. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" that was the almighty call of Christ from heaven which turned the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, which made the persecutor a defender, the blasphemer a minister of the Gospel. And this man, having experienced it in his own heart what a blessing, what a heavenly bliss it is to know that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, cries out to you and me, my friend, that this is a faithful saying—a saying which cannot err, which is true, which, though heaven and earth pass away, shall not pass away, but shall remain until eternity.

Ah! indeed a faithful saying—a saying upon which already the patriarchs of old could well build their hopes. Hardly had man, the just and righteous man, fallen into sin and become a sinner, a child of eternal damnation, when God, the ever gracious and merciful Father, promised him a helper, a Redeemer, who should

crush the Serpent and bruise its head; and no sooner had Eve given birth to her first child, when she exclaimed, "I have gotten the man, the Lord!" thinking she had the Christ, the promised Messiah, who should come into the world to save sinners.

And what was it, my friends, upon which an Abraham, a Moses, a David centered their hopes? What was it that made thousands of Israelites happy in their last moments, in their hour of death? Was it not the sweet story, the oft-repeated promise, that Christ Jesus should come into the world to save sinners? Ah! indeed it was, for well did they know that "the scepter should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." And this Shiloh has come, has appeared, 1900 years ago, for, behold, "when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Go with me, my friends, to the little village of Bethlehem. It is no palace, no magnificent mansion towards which I would direct your steps; no, but a stable, a poor, humble shed of some poor, humble shepherd. Now we are at the door; let us enter. What is it that presents itself to our view? What is it that we see? A little babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Who can that be—in such poor, needy circumstances? My friends,

That is the Christ, our God and Lord,
Who in all need shall aid afford;
He will Himself your Savior be,
From all your sins to make you free.

That is He "of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write," the promised Messiah, Christ Jesus, God's only Son, who came into the world to save sinners. Now go with me to the fields, the commons near Bethlehem, where a little band of shepherds is watching over a flock. It is night; darkness has surrounded man and beast. But lo! Suddenly the night is changed into day, darkness into light; a blinding, brilliant, dazzling ray flashes from heaven, the angel of the Lord appears, and the glory of the Lord shines round about the shepherds. These, awe-stricken, deathly pale, trembling from head to foot, cast down their eyes, knowing and feeling that they are sinners, lost creatures, and not being able therefore to endure the brilliancy, the holy luster of God. But what is it that makes them lift up their heads? What is it that brings back the color to their faces? My friends, it is the sweet story, the faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. For listen to what the angel said to them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,

which is Christ the Lord." Surely, never before had human ears heard such a sweet message; that, verily, was news which no human being had ever thought of! And hardly had the angel ceased speaking, when suddenly there was with him a multitude of the heavenly host, millions and millions of holy angels, praising God and singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Thus God Himself sent His angels, His ministering spirits, to proclaim the birth of Jesus Christ, His only Son and our Savior. Who could, therefore, justly doubt the saying of the apostle in our text that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners? No rational being, surely.

Moreover, we read in the Gospel of St. John that the Jews sent priests and Levites to John the Baptist to ask him, "Who art thou?" And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, "I am not the Christ. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." The next day John seeth Jesus coming to him, and saith, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Pointing with his finger to the approaching person, John, with these words, bore record of that Person, and declared Him before all the people to be the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, God's and David's Son.

A short time before, when Jesus was baptized, lo, the heavens were opened unto John, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Jesus, and lo, a voice from heaven was saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus God Himself declares that this Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind.

And what is it that Christ Himself said? Who did He profess to be? Answer: "I and my Father are one. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." And this witness He has borne, has time and again affirmed, yea, sworn that He came into the world to save sinners, and hence He is either—O awful thought!—an impostor of the deepest dye, or—and thank God it's true!—the Son of the almighty and ever gracious God who "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." O look to the Garden of Gethsemane! Behold, how, laden with our sins, He is, in our stead, fighting the battle of life and death. Look to the cross on Calvary! Behold, how, crowned with cruel thorns, bleeding from numberless wounds, nailed to the shameful tree, He is dying an ignominious death. But, my friends, remember, He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised

for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. And this selfsame Jesus that died more than 1800 years ago God raised from the dead as a loud testimony of the truth of our text.

And what is it that His apostles, His followers, thought of Him? Did they look upon the saying of our text as upon a faithful saying? Indeed they did, for being asked by the Lord, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter, in the name of all, replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And history proclaims it with a loud voice that the Christians of the first centuries rather lost money and goods, wife and children, yea, their own life than to doubt the words of our text that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. But oh, how many thousands, yea, millions of people are living to-day, who deny the saying, who, although they write the number of this year, perhaps every day, still do not know why they write it, namely because so many years have passed since Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. But whatever such men may think or say,

The Word they still shall let remain,
And not a thank have for it.

The saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is a faithful saying, a true, unerring saying—a saying against which even the gates of hell shall not prevail.

But, my friends, this saying is not only a faithful saying, no, it is also worthy of all acceptance, and this is the second part of our text to which I desire to call your attention.

II.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;" thus writes the great apostle in our text. Why is this saying worthy of all acceptance? The answer is: Because all men by nature are sinners, lost and condemned creatures. Perhaps you think this is not true. Hear what the Word of God says. In the First Epistle of John we read: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." There, my friend, do you now believe that you are a sinner, or do you still consider yourself a good, innocent, righteous person? Listen to what St. Paul writes: "There is none righteous, no, not one." O my friend, if you have not this knowledge concerning yourself, look into God's holy commandments. Can you fulfill them—fulfill them as the Lord asks you to do? Can you, do you fear, love, and trust in God above all things? Did you never take His holy name in vain, never curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie or deceive by His name? Did you call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks? Have you

always loved your neighbor as yourself? never hurt nor harmed him, never spoken unkind of or to him? Oh, if you will tell the truth, you must confess: I have again and again transgressed God's commandments; you must sigh with the Psalmist: "Mine iniquities are more than the hairs of mine head." Consequently you are a sinner, a child of eternal damnation, for "whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Think not, "Yes, that and that and that person may be a sinner, but I, no, I am no sinner. I always try to lead an upright, honest life." My friend! Paul, the great and holy apostle, writes in our text that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Now, if Paul, the chosen vessel of God, is a sinner, ay, the chief, *i. e.*, the greatest, of sinners, where will you and I stay? Surely, there is no one here who will claim that he is a better Christian than St. Paul was. Therefore, hard as it may be for our old Adam, we must, if we wish to be truthful, acknowledge that "we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God," that we are by nature children of the devil and subjects of his diabolical kingdom. "But," perhaps someone is thinking, "then we are all lost, eternally lost; then we must despair of ever entering the kingdom of heaven!" My friend, have you not heard the faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners? Sinners we are, you and I, and everyone present; but just because we *are* such, Christ has come into the world to save us, for "the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Sinners, and sinners *only*, does He save, for He says, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If, consequently, you do not consider yourself a sinner, it is as much as saying that you do not want His salvation. But I hope to God that you see your sinful condition, and look to Him for help who alone can all aid afford, to Him who has come from the seat of His majesty into this vale of tears that He might save us poor, forlorn sinners, and make us rich in the sight of God in grace, righteousness, life everlasting, and eternal salvation.

O how worthy of all acceptance, therefore, the sweet and faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners! In Him is salvation, free salvation, atonement for all your sins, but in Him *only*, for St. Peter says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." And in our text we read that "*Christ Jesus* came into the world to save sinners." It does not say that some saint, some patriarch, prophet, or apostle, or anybody else came to save, no, *Christ Jesus* came. *He* it is, and *He only*, who can save us. "With might of ours can naught be done," for we cannot merit any-

thing, cannot by dint of so-called good works earn the heavenly abode, for "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." We are, by nature, enemies of God and therefore subject to His wrath; our will is contrary to His will, for His is a holy, while ours is an unholy, sinful will. Hence we cannot merit anything, but must go to Jesus empty-handed, must say with the poet:

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

Yes, to His cross, to the cross of Jesus, we must look for our salvation, must cling to Him as to the Rock of Ages cleft for us. There our sins, and though they be crimson, are washed snow-white in the blood of the Lamb; there on Calvary is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. O how sweet the faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners! O how worthy of all acceptance!

But, my friend, let me ask you a question before I close. Do you look upon the saying of our text as upon a faithful saying? Do you deem it worthy of all acceptance? Ay, have you accepted it—accepted it in a true, living faith? Remember, you are a sinner, a lost and condemned person; you cannot help yourself; there is only One who can aid you:

Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth Lord.

He came into the world to save sinners, to save you and me. O look to Him, and Him only, for salvation. Do not hesitate, do not wait, no, now, even now, go to Him. Do not say, "I must become a better person first, must do this and that and that"—oh no, but go to Him now, this moment, and say:

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

O my friend, for God's sake do not tarry, do not say, "Later on 'tis time enough;" no, now, now, even this second, go to Him, confess your sins, and accept forgiveness of Him who has shed His precious blood for you. Who knows if this may not be the last time that you will hear the Word of God, if your soul may not be called hither this night, ay, this hour! O therefore turn, turn from your wicked ways, repent of your sins, and cast yourself into the arms of your Savior. There you will find forgiveness of sins, life everlasting, and eternal salvation. Nothing, nothing is required of you to do, everything is done, is prepared. Believe, only believe it! Faith, and faith only, is the bridge which leads from this earthly life to the heavenly life, which spans the dark abyss into which all those will

fall who do not want to cross on this bridge. May God, therefore, grant both you and me this faith which consists in the acceptance of the faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and may He send us His Holy Spirit to enlighten us more and more, so that, when our last hour approaches, we may triumphantly exclaim in true, living faith:

Jesus' blood and righteousness
My jewel is and festive dress,
With this shall I 'fore God prevail
When I the heavenly portals hail!

Amen.

O. K.

Communion Address.

LUKE 22, 20.

BELoved FRIENDS IN CHRIST:

It is highly important to note that the words which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke, as He instituted the Holy Supper, are the words of a testament. When the hour drew near for Him to depart from this world Jesus made His will. He gathered His disciples around Him in the city of Jerusalem for the last solemn meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to eat the Passover. At this occasion Jesus spoke of scarcely anything but His impending death, and then proceeded to set forth His will and testament in the presence of His followers. He took bread and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me." Likewise He took the cup, which contained wine, gave it to them, and said, "Take, drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in my blood shed for the remission of your sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

Now since in these words the Lord Jesus has set forth His will, His testament, He certainly meant every word He said. He did not speak in figurative language. When He said, "This is my body, this is my blood," He meant to say that with the bread the body "which is given for us," and therefore His true body, and that with the wine the blood "which is shed for us," and therefore His true blood, should be received. He did not mean to say that the bread and wine should be signs, symbols, emblems of His body and blood. The fact that these words are His testament forbids such an explanation. What would the judge say in court, if the heirs came and put their own construction on the words of the testator and declared that he meant differently? that his words must not be taken literally? He would say, Here are the plain words of the tes-

tament; you must abide by the letter. And so must we strictly abide by the letter of the holy Sacrament, because it is the testament of our Lord. Let us consider, with the aid of God's Holy Spirit,

THE GREAT TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD,

and see,

- I. *What it bequeaths to us, and*
- II. *What benefit it confers upon us.*

I.

"*This cup is the new testament,*" says Jesus. A testament is always made for the purpose of bequeathing possessions. Nobody can make a testament unless he has certain things to leave for his relatives or friends. Who would be so foolish as to make a will if he has nothing valuable to dispose of? Now the Lord Jesus had something valuable to dispose of unto His followers, and therefore He made His testament in the night in which He was betrayed and promised therein unto His followers the great treasures which should be theirs after His departure.

He calls this will the *new* testament. Another testament had been in vogue before this time, the old testament. The Passover, which the Lord had just been eating with His disciples, reminded them of the old testament. The Passover was celebrated in commemoration of the flight of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt in the night when all the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain. God made a testament for His chosen people in that night. He had them slaughter and eat, in every household and family, a lamb without blemish, which was to prefigure the sacrifice of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, and bequeathed to them the land of promise, the land of Canaan, to which they should proceed forthwith and escape the bondage of Egypt. A testament always implies a promise, but the things which God promised and bequeathed to His people by the old testament were but temporal goods and earthly happiness.

But what does Christ bequeath to us in the new testament? What gifts does He bestow on us in the holy Sacrament of His Supper? Lands, earthly goods? No; though He is Lord over all, Owner of heaven and earth, yet He had humbled Himself to such an extent, while in the flesh, as not to have where to lay His head. It would not have been necessary to make a testament for earthly goods. Jesus meant to bequeath to us something greater and better than the temporal blessings of the old covenant. What is it, then? Christ has bequeathed to us in the Lord's Supper a gift so grand and sublime that even the angels in heaven would envy us therefor

if they were capable of such an emotion. He has bequeathed to us Himself, His own person, His own true body and blood. O my dear friends, can we realize it? Can we comprehend it? Christ, our dear Lord, comes to us every time we receive His holy Sacrament, comes to us damnable sinners, comes to us invisibly, and yet not merely spiritually, but bodily, is received by us in a sacramental, inconceivable manner with the bread and wine, dwells in us and we in Him. Thus does He make true with us His blessed words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

II.

And now, in the second place, let us consider what this testament secures for us, or what benefit we derive from the reception of our Lord Jesus Christ in the holy Sacrament.

Jesus says, "*This cup is the new testament in my blood,*" or, as Matthew and Mark put it, "This is my blood of the new testament." In the Old Testament God's people had to offer sacrifices for their sins, and the blood of beasts had to be shed to obtain forgiveness. Almost all things were by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood was no remission. Now all this sacrificing and shedding of blood in the Old Testament was done in anticipation of Christ's atonement for the sins of the whole world. It was to foreshadow the great sacrifices of the Son of God when, as the Lamb of God, He would suffer and die on the cross for the redemption of the whole fallen human race. It was to impress on the minds of God's people the great truth that the Messiah would have to do nothing less for them than to shed His blood, that they might be made rid of the guilt of their sins.

Now it is this very blood shed for our sins which we receive in the holy Sacrament. It is the very ransom which Christ has paid for our guilt, and which God has accepted of Him, that we partake of in the Lord's Supper. Can we be better assured of the actual forgiveness of all our sins than when we possess the very means by which our forgiveness has been obtained? Can we doubt for one moment that God has been perfectly reconciled with us poor sinners when He Himself approaches us and says, Here, O sinner, take, eat, and drink, I shall unite myself with thee?

Behold, this is the great benefit we derive from the reception of our Lord in the Sacrament. The forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are sealed to us. For where there is forgiveness of sin there is also life and salvation.

May the Lord, then, grant us His grace that we approach His table in true faith! For without faith it is impossible to please God, and without faith we shall not only derive no benefit from the

reception of Christ in the Lord's Supper, but also eat and drink damnation unto ourselves. Let us come to our Lord as poor damnable sinners and say with the prodigal son, "Father, I have sinned in heaven and before Thee, and am not worthy to be called Thy son," but, at the same time, believe with a true heart that Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Thus shall we be worthy communicants and receive the holy Sacrament to the salvation of our souls. Amen. H. S.

Funeral Address at the Death of an Only Child.

JOB 1, 21.

There are many good and useful lessons in the remarkable history of Job, which suggest profitable matter for reflection to all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances. Job's history, in brief, is this: God had given him a large family of sons and daughters, whom he loved very much. The kind Lord had also given him great riches. He had permitted him to enjoy His blessings for many years, and then sent great trouble upon Job to try his patience and faith. So the Lord caused *all* of Job's riches and children to be taken from him, by robbers, fire, and storm. When Job heard all these things, he rent his clothes and bowed down to the ground, saying, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

It has pleased the good Lord in His wise and unsearchable providence to take from this world of sorrow and temptation the blood-bought and immortal soul of your only and dearly beloved boy. Lift up your heads and hearts, O ye afflicted and sadly mourning parents, and sorrow not as those who have no hope. Your beloved child is not lost, but the Lord has taken it to Himself. Your child did not perish, but the Lord gave him life eternal. Therefore, put an end to your grief and sorrow, and fully and cheerfully resign yourselves to the holy will and good pleasure of God. Let me kindly assist you in this by presenting to you

JOB'S NOBLE CONDUCT AT THE SUDDEN DEATH OF HIS BELOVED CHILDREN, AN EXAMPLE HOW YOU OUGHT TO CONDUCT YOURSELVES UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

I.

Learn from Job's example *humbly to submit yourselves to God's holy will and authority at the death of your dear child.*

Mark Job's humble submission to God's will and authority. "*The Lord gave,*" cried the patient sufferer, when he heard of the

sudden and dreadful death of his ten children. "The Lord gave," that is to say—the Creator of all things, the Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost, the Triune God. And what did He give? The children which He had taken away. He had given them life, He had given them body and soul. The Lord gave them to me as a precious gift, to care for them, to protect them, to teach them, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They are the precious gifts of God. The Lord gave. O blessed and important words!—O ye mourning Christians! learn from pious Job and say, "The Lord gave." God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost gave. He gave your child life and being, He called it into existence, He gave it body and soul. It is the work of His hands. Yea, the Lord gave it to you. He intrusted and committed it to your special care. He wanted you to care for its body and soul, which you faithfully did. You had it baptized, you sent it to a Christian school and to Confirmation lessons, to have it prepared for Confirmation. Thus far you cheerfully fulfilled and did the will of Him who gave you this dear child. Thus far you submitted to God's holy will and authority.

But Job, the patient cross-bearer, humbly bows before Him who gave, and in all humility proceeds, "*The Lord hath taken away.*" Glorious submission this! Job would say: The kind Lord who created my children and gave them to me has graciously taken them from this wicked world to Himself into His heavenly glory.—Bereaved parents, learn from pious Job. Learn to submit yourselves to God's holy will and authority. Your dear child is not lost. It is in paradise, in the hands of its heavenly Father. The Lord has taken it away. Not Satan, the old bitter foe, not an enemy, not an accident, not fire, not sickness, not storm, not the physician's mistake, not the want of its parents' care, but the Lord has taken it from you. Not the Lord and blind fate, but the Lord only; the loving Lord who created and gave this child; the gracious Lord and God who has redeemed it, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won it from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that it may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom; the Lord who has called it by the Gospel, enlightened it with His gifts, sanctified and kept it in the true faith. And wherefrom has the Lord taken it away? From this wicked and tempting world; from danger, from hunger, from thirst, from cold, from heat, from sorrow, from sickness and pain. And whereto has the Lord taken it? To heaven, to Himself, to the place where no evil shall befall it, neither

any plague come nigh to its dwelling. Your child is with God in heaven, where there shall be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Your child died in the Lord, and now is with the Lord in eternal joy and glory, as the Word of God clearly states: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth."

Remember this, ye mourning parents, and mourn not like those who have no hope. Humbly submit yourselves to the holy will and authority of your dear Lord. Cheerfully commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. The kind Lord rules everything, forgetting nothing, overlooking nothing. He makes no mistakes. Do therefore as pious Job did, cheerfully submitting yourselves to the Lord's will, and saying, Lord, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. Thy will be done.

II.

In the second place, also learn from Job's example *to pray and to praise the Lord even under the most trying circumstances.*

Sorrow is a cup that all men must drink in this world of sin, trouble, and tears. We cannot avoid it. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Like our Master, we are often "men of sorrow." But what must be done in time of trouble? We must pray. Like Job, we must fall down and worship. Prayer is the best remedy that we can use in time of trouble. We read that Christ Himself prayed when His soul was sorrowful. "He fell on His face and prayed." "We, too," says Luther, "must learn this; we must not allow trouble to so affect us that we forget to pray. For it is a necessary part of divine worship, and pleasing to God, not to despair in anguish and distress, but, when attacked by them, to lift up our hearts to the Lord and seek His help. The 91. Psalm testifies to this, where God says: 'He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.' But this is very difficult for us; for when God suffers anxiety and trouble to come upon us, we imagine Him to be angry with us and to be our enemy. But the reverse is the case. For if God were always angry with us when He suffers sorrow and distress to come upon us, it would follow that He was angry with His dear Son, with Job, etc. Solomon says that the father scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, and "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Therefore, dear Christians, do not regard God as your enemy because He took your dear child, His precious property, to His heavenly abode. Murmur not, but worship. Lift up your heads and pray. In all humility say, Lord, Thy will be done.

But pious Job did not only worship and pray in time of trouble, but he even praised and gave thanks, saying, "*Blessed be the name of the Lord.*" The Lord who gave, the Lord who hath taken away, be blessed.

This is what Job did under trying circumstances. Learn from pious Job. As he praised the Lord and blessed His holy name, even so should you bless the name of the Lord. Remember, firstly, the great blessing and kindness the Lord conferred upon your beloved child. The Lord delivered it from all evil, from sin, death, and the terrible power of the devil. He has taken it from this wicked world, from danger and every temptation, and conveyed it to where it enjoys everlasting happiness. Your child is happy. Therefore, murmur not, weep no more, but praise and bless the Lord. "The Lord hath done all things well." Bless His name!

Remember, secondly, the great blessing the Lord conferred upon you in sending you this affliction. These trials must benefit you spiritually, as St. Paul says: "All things work together for good to them that love God." Affliction, to speak plainly, serves our Father in heaven as a means towards weaning us from the world, bringing us to Christ, inciting us to read the Bible, impelling us to prayer, and rendering us more zealous of good works. The Lord "purgeth the branch, that it may bear more fruit." Remember this, mourning Christians, and murmur and complain not because of your present affliction. It is not meant to do you harm, but good, both body and soul. God chastens you "for your profit, that you may be partakers of His holiness." He has taken your dear child to heaven to draw your hearts and minds heavenward. Therefore, praise the Lord and bless His holy name.

And, finally, as you look forward to the days yet to come, bless the name of the Lord. You know not what they may be or bring, whether they will be bright or dark, whether there will be still quite a number of them, or not. But you do know that you are in the hands of the Lord who doeth all things well. He did not, nor ever will err in any of His dealings with you. He will give and take away, He will afflict and bereave, with perfect wisdom, at the right time, in the right manner. The great Shepherd of the sheep makes no mistake. He leads every lamb of His flock the way that leads to the city of eternal and blissful habitation. There your beloved child will meet you and join you in giving thanks and praising the holy name of the Lord.—"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may be bound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. 15, 13. Amen.

J. C. A.

Outlines for Sermons on the Gospel-Lessons.

New Year's Day.

LUKE 2, 21.

New Year is the day for planning the future and for all sorts of good resolves. Men plan how to manage their affairs and what to accomplish in life. But as men look ahead and plan for the future, they generally do not look as far ahead as they should; they do not consider the day of judgment which is to come, 2 Cor. 5, 10. — Let us bear in mind that with every year we get nearer to that great day in which we must give an account of our stewardship, and consider on this New Year's Day two important truths suggested to us by the Gospel of the day.

TWO GREAT TRUTHS TO BE CONSIDERED ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

I. *Time flies.*

II. *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.*

I.

a. *Text.* — Eight days had been accomplished since the birth of the wonderful Child whose coming into the world the angels had hailed with their heavenly song on the plains of Bethlehem. The Eternal One had now entered upon a course of time, and His days and years were now numbered like those of the children of men. His course was comparatively short. The Son of God remained in the flesh upon this earth only thirty-three years, and on this day the first eight days of these thirty-three years were accomplished.

b. *Application.* — What great truth does this statement of our Gospel, that eight days were accomplished since the Savior's birth, impress upon our minds? It suggests to us that we contemplate the flight of time. What an appropriate subject for New Year's Day! Another year of our earthly pilgrimage is passed. How quickly did it pass, how fast did those 366 days of 1904 roll by! In childhood and in the days of youth we are not so much aware of the flight of time; time does not seem so short to us, and that is, probably, owing to the fact that we are in a state of development, that things are new to us in the world, and that so many new thoughts and new ideas crowd upon us that time seems long. But when we have been made thoroughly acquainted with the ways of this life and perform our regular routine work, we are surprised how time flies. We understand the words of Ps. 90, 4—6. 10. Ascending the mount of life's pathway we soon reach the summit and our hairs turning gray, our children growing into manhood and womanhood, our increasing bodily infirmities remind us of the fact that we are on the descent.

Lost time is never found again. The years gone by cannot be recalled and lived over. Do you make a faithful and conscientious use of the days and years which God has given you? Are you aware that God has not given you these days and years upon earth that you might do with them as you please, but that He has placed you into this world to prepare for that world which is to come, to work while it is day, before the night cometh when no man can work? See by all means that you do not live in vain, but that your life is profitably spent, and if you have been neglectful in this respect, begin now to set your affection on the things above.

II.

a. The sweet name of Jesus is placed above the portals of the new year, the same sweet name which guided us through the year that is passed. Earthly conditions change, but Jesus remains the same merciful Savior whose grace is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him.

b. Our Gospel tells us that He was circumcised on this day. As our children receive forgiveness of sin in Baptism and are made Christians, so did the children of the Israelites receive forgiveness in Circumcision and were made members of God's chosen people. But what need did the holy Child Jesus have of circumcision? He had no sin. He was purer and cleaner than an angel in heaven. Yet He was put under the Law for our sakes, He was circumcised as though He were no better than any other child in Israel. The Master of the Law, the Lawgiver, became subject to the Law, that for us He might fulfill the Law which we did not keep, Gal. 4, 4. And to-day He shed the first drops of His precious blood, to be followed by streams of blood on the cross. He has perfectly atoned for all the sins which we committed in the past year. They are cast into the depths of the sea, Ps. 103, 10—17. If only we trust in our blessed Savior who was circumcised for us, He will continue to blot out our sins as a cloud and as a thick cloud our transgressions.

c. As He provides for our immortal souls, so will He also provide for our mortal bodies in the new year. The name which the newborn Child received in our Gospel had been announced by the angel "*before He was conceived in the womb*," and exactly as the angel had named Him, so was He called. The great and mighty God remembers and considers even the smallest things, and not any of His words fall to the ground. He will surely make true all His gracious promises. How confidently, then, can we look into the future before us! Though everything is shrouded in darkness and we do not know what is in store for us, one thing we do know, and that is that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. He will be our Guide, our Rod, and our Staff to comfort us in all the vicissitudes of life and safely to lead us through the valley of the shadow of death to the heavenly mansions. H. S.